



NATIONAL
VETERANS
SPORTS CLINIC

September 21, 2012



**MISSION
RE
DEFINED**
WWW.VA.GOV/ADAPTIVESPORTS

U.S. Navy Veteran
Kerry Sprouffske
Team Neptune

NEPTUNE	CALYPSO
NAUTILUS	APOLLO
TITAN	PHOENIX
POSEIDON	VULCAN
OLYMPUS	MERCURY



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

- 7:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
**TRACK&FIELD/
ROWING/ARCHERY**
USOC
- 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
SURFING
La Jolla Shores
- 11:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
SAILING
San Diego Marriott Marina
- 9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
KAYAKING
Mission Bay Yacht Club
- 9:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
CYCLING
Tideland Park
- 5:00 – 5:30 P.M.
**MANDATORY
TEAM LEADER
MEETING**
Santa Rosa Room
- 6:00 P.M.
AWARDS RECEPTION:
Marriot Marquis, San Diego Ballroom
- 6:45 P.M.
DINNER - TASTE OF SAN DIEGO
Marriot Marquis, San Diego Ballroom
- 7:45 P.M.
CLOSING CEREMONY
Marriot Marquis, San Diego Ballroom

With a big bright sun hat and an even brighter smile, Army Veteran Dawn Mattson glides her kayak onto the sandy beach of Mission Bay. She can't feel the sand between her toes, but she can certainly feel the wind in her hair and the sun on her face. Even her eyes seem to be smiling. Today, Mattson is on equal footing with everyone else, she feels normal, alive and most of all accomplished.

"I am having fun, and I didn't know if I would ever feel that again," says Mattson.

On January 31, 2008, the Gulf War era Veteran's life changed forever after another driver ran a red light and smashed into her car. After learning she would never walk again, she slipped into a deep, dark place that paralyzed her even more. Isolation and despair consumed her. "I just sat in my chair and watched TV all day," says Mattson.

Finally, a good friend suggested Mattson go to her local VA, it took months before Mattson finally came around. It took a patient and persistent group of female providers, but most of all it took extraordinary courage from the one person who finally realized she had to help herself.

"They are like my little family, they are so supportive and I feel like I have a reason to live again."

And Mattson backs it up in the kayak. Working as a tandem with teammate Kim Specht, the two glide across the water like professionals with fast, perfect, mirrored strokes. For Mattson, it seems effortless and comfortable; a place she never dreamed she'd be four years ago. She doesn't need her wheelchair today, only her inner strength and the confidence to know that this day is the beginning of many more days just like it. As she takes off the life vest there is only gratitude on her face and appreciation in her heart for her new life and the support of her new friends.

"I have purpose, I have things to do and new people to meet."

Story by
Jill Atwood

They are Best Friends...

unless Junior is trying to school Senior on his rowing techniques.

"Yea he did, and I needed it, but I told him, 'Hey I am just trying to keep it together,'" says Morris Williams, Sr.

The father and son team from Memphis are bonded by blood and by their service. Both served in the United States Army, both are Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans and both are inspired by each other.

"We don't go a day without talking to each other, my dad is my best friend," says Morris Williams, Jr.

Williams, Sr. was deployed to Iraq in 2003. Junior says that day changed his life. He later enlisted in the Army. He too was deployed to Iraq four years later.

Today, this father and son team is inseparable. They go to support group meetings together at VA and now conquer adaptive sports together. Williams, Sr. pauses for a second and says "After watching my son deploy, I don't take anything for granted in this life. Being here with him is a dream come true."

Story by
Jill Atwood



2012 SUMMER SPORTS CLINIC SNAPSHOT



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS VISIT WWW.VA.GOV/ADAPTIVESPORTS

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This has been a great week.

I know, because many of you have stopped me and told me. From the sporting venues to the Block Party to the halls of the Marriott, I've heard it again and again. Each of you has a story about challenges overcome, goals met and lives changed. And while each circumstance is unique, the theme story is the same:

"Life is different now, but through adaptive sports, it's focused again."

When a Veteran's mission in the military ends, especially because of an injury, many are left wondering 'now what?' The objective, or at least the path to it, is dramatically altered. That's where the idea of "Mission ReDefined" was born. It's the idea that, as former service men and women, you have the tools to successfully map your road to recovery by adapting your goals. And as the motto for VA's Office of National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events, we use the "Mission ReDefined" brand to highlight resources designed for you. You can start with our website, www.va.gov/adaptivesports, where you can find infor-

mation on the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic or any of our five other national events. Check out our Sports Club Finder to locate adaptive sports programs right in your community. Or learn about our Olympic Opportunity Fund, which provides funds to community organizations providing adaptive sports programs, as well as supporting Veteran athletes training in Paralympic programs. "Mission ReDefined" means tools to help you get your life, or mission, back on track.

So here's the bottom line: no excuses. Take what you learned at the Clinic this week and put it into place in your daily life. You've got challenges. Confront them. You've got goals. Meet them. Make the decision to achieve your personal best and redefine your own mission.

I've included a Mission ReDefined sticker in each of these newsletters. I urge you to put it on your racing wheelchair, handcycle or whatever piece of adaptive sports equipment you are using to live that motto.

Thanks for being here. And thanks for pushing yourself all year to live your own Mission ReDefined.

Semper Fi,

Chris Nowak
Director
National Veterans Sports
Programs & Special Events



It took six years for Noah Currier to push past his accident and get **ON THE MOVE.**

After a friend told him he needed to try out the VA's National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, Marine Corps Veteran Noah Currier made the move and attended the 2009 event. Six National events and numerous local events later, Noah now helps fund other Veterans through his foundation and apparel company Oscar Mike.

Oscar Mike, from the military acronym used on radios signifying "on the move," was founded on Veteran's Day of 2011 with the mission to push disabled Veterans to keep on the move and stay active through local and national adaptive sporting and competitive events.

"I was excited that he started Oscar Mike," said fellow 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Battalion Marine Veteran Justin Brown. "He inspired me. Now a few months down the road I have become a big Oscar Mike supporter and have told OM's story to many because I believe in its mission and I believe in Noah," he said.

The story of Oscar Mike began on June 2, 2003 just three days after Currier came home from the invasion in Iraq. He was in the passenger seat of a truck when the driver fell asleep at the wheel, causing the truck to roll down a hill several times. The accident left Currier paralyzed from the chest down from a C6 fracture in his spine.

"I remember hearing that my old battalion was returning from the initial invasion of Iraq. So when I heard, only a couple days after they returned, it was Noah in the vehicle accident. My heart sank. He lived through combat and now was paralyzed because of a mistake," said Brown.

"It took me six years to finally get involved and get back on the move," said Currier after finishing a day of sailing on a Challenge America sailboat. He really enjoys all the events but looks forward to track and field this summer.

"There's just something about being at the



Olympic Training Center, getting to practice where some of the paralympians train," he said.

The urban-styled military apparel is 100 percent made in America, unlike so many other companies' products, said Currier. It originated from one t-shirt idea with a quote from Henry V, saying "He who sheds blood with me shall forever be my brother." It has since expanded to hats, sweatshirts, shorts and other style t-shirts.

Ten percent of the proceeds go toward the foundation to help fund Veterans to events like the SSC. So far the Foundation has sent eight Veterans to the VA National Wheelchair Games and helped fund other local events like the ones found at www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_clubfinder.asp. "I get back from this Clinic on Saturday and then Sunday I'll be taking a group of Veterans out skydiving," said the 29-year-old Illinois resident.

"It all started with five Vets in chairs at the Winter Sports Clinic," said Currier. We were saying, "Wouldn't it be cool if...and then all of the sudden it just came together." The purpose is to push events like VA's National Events, on a peer-to-peer level, and then have them continue on throughout the year, Currier said.

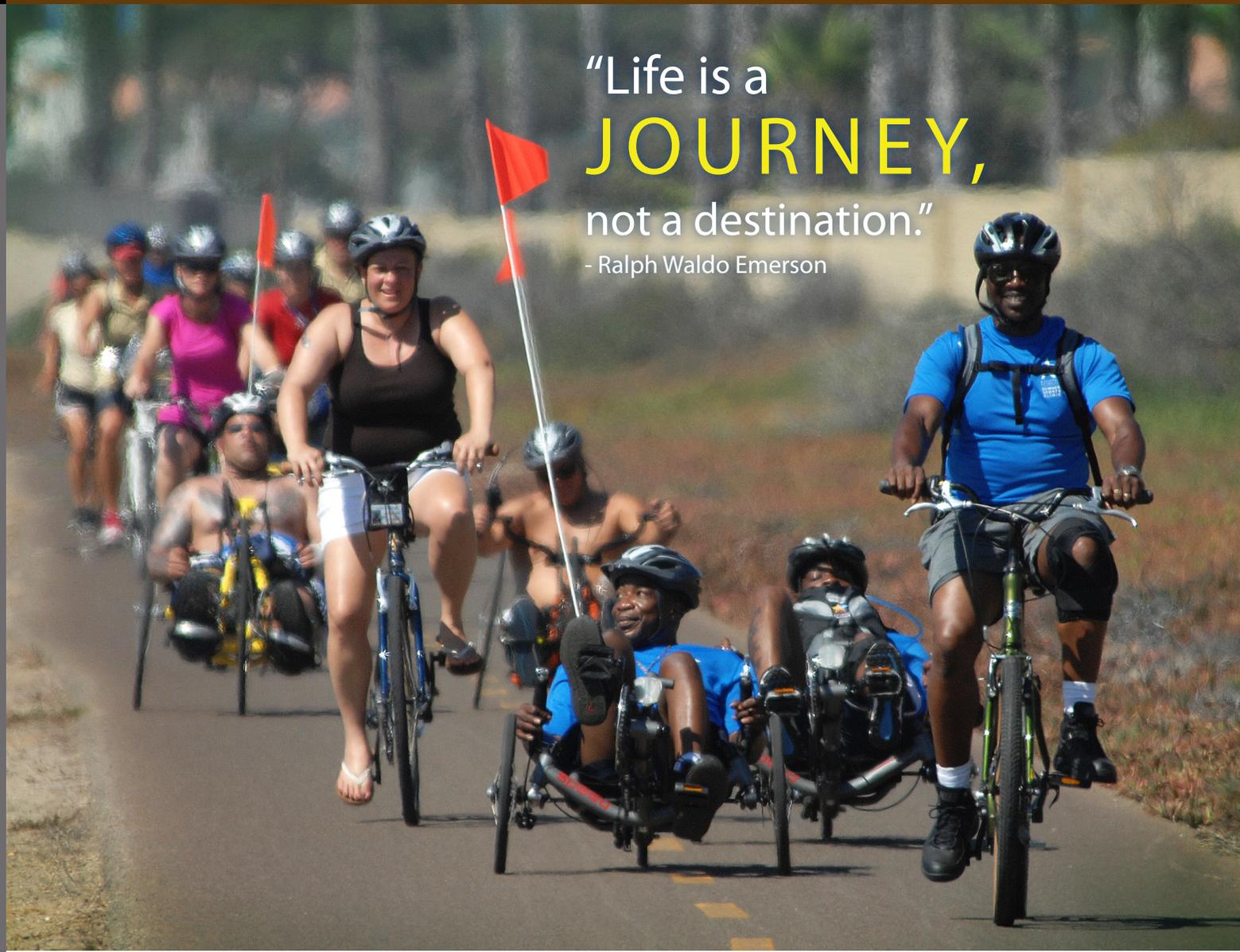
"We hope to be able to inspire others the way we've inspired each other."

Currier has redefined his mission to staying active and helping his fellow brothers keep physically active every day. To visit his site or see how you can participate, visit www.oscarmike.org.

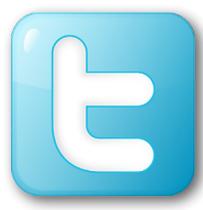
"I have seen many Veterans give up and fold in, but not Noah, said Brown. He is pushing for the whole world to recognize just because you've been injured, doesn't mean you can't move forward."

Story by Jessica Schiefer

“Life is a
JOURNEY,
not a destination.”
- Ralph Waldo Emerson



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